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ABSTRACT

The potential of cooperative efforts between universities and local education agencies is examined and a model for facilitating school/university partnerships is presented. The model is based on cooperative experiences of the Center for Educational Improvement at Loyola University (LCEI), New Orleans, and public and parochial schools in the New Orleans area. The paper is presented in five sections. Section I explains the relationship of the LCEI to the New Orleans Public School System (NOPSS) and the New Orleans Archdiocesan School System (NOADSS). The relationship is based on the school systems relaying concerns to LCEI so that it can analyze the problems and direct university resources to the most pressing problems. Section II identifies major functions of LCEI--school and teacher improvement, research and evaluation, and communication via a liaison role. Section III outlines LCEI objectives and corresponding activities. Objectives include improving education in New Orleans in general and in inner-city schools in particular, providing faculty development workshops, offering credit hours for professional education courses, and communicating with schools regarding needs assessment. Section IV explains LCEI's administrative hierarchy. The final section points out the significance of LCEI/school cooperation and explains how a model based on this cooperation can be generalized to other settings. (DB)

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A MODEL FOR FACILITATING LEA/UNIVERSITY COOPERATIVE EFFORTS

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Abstract

Included at least implicitly among the goals of a university is a commitment to analyzing, coordinating, and utilizing its resources to assist elementary and secondary education in the local community when such a need is perceived. There is, however, a paucity of conceptual literature which addresses a model that could direct appropriate types of local educational agency (LEA)/ university cooperative efforts. This paper, therefore, suggests a broad-based model for facilitating such cooperative efforts by explicating the Center for Educational Improvement established at Loyola University in New Orleans for the purpose of impacting both the public and parochial school systems in the community. Although the account and illustrations provided in this paper are specific to Loyola University and its surrounding school systems, the nature, organization, and functions of such a multidisciplinary academic unit are indeed generalizable to other settings.

A MODEL FOR FACILITATING LEA/UNIVERSITY COOPERATIVE EFFORTS

Usually included among the goals of a university is a commitment to utilizing its resources in addressing various needs extant in the community in which it is located. Occasionally, the status of elementary and secondary education in a given area is cited by citizens from diverse backgrounds and fields of endeavor as one of their most pressing concerns. Hence, it becomes incumbent upon the local university to analyze, coordinate, and utilize its resources in a concerted effort to improve the quality of education in the community. Such is the case regarding Loyola University in New Orleans and the public and parochial school systems in the area.

Although some attempts have been made in the professional literature to address possible programs and mechanisms for promoting school/university partnerships (for example, Bennett, 1972; Boyer & Maertens, 1975; Boyer & Satterfield, 1973; Hough, 1975; Lorber, 1972; McLeod, 1975; Yarbrough, 1975), the principal thrust of these efforts has focused on field-based aspects of teacher education programs that are concerned with pre-service and in-service teacher development. While this type of effort is indeed commendable, and whereas others have expounded on school-community/university ventures broader in scope than simply teacher education (for example, Atter & Fox, 1978; Day, 1975; Dennis, 1978; Gilbert, 1978; Sills & Harmon, 1978), there still exists a paucity of conceptual literature which addresses a model that could serve to give direction to appropriate types of LEA/university cooperative efforts of a multidisciplinary nature.

The purpose of this paper, then, is to suggest a broad-based model for facilitating LEA/university cooperative endeavors of a multidisciplinary nature. The explication of this model is in terms of the Center for Educational Improvement established at Loyola University in New Orleans in the fall of 1978 for the expressed purpose of impacting both the public and parochial school systems in the New Orleans area.

Nature and Organizational Position

The Loyola Center for Educational Improvement (LCEI) is a multidisciplinary unit within the university structure which coordinates Loyola's involvement with the New Orleans Public School System (NOPSS) and the New Orleans Archdiocesan School System (NOADSS) for the purpose of improving the quality of elementary and secondary education. More specifically, the LCEI is comprised of a public education component and a parochial education component, both of which involve the analysis, coordination, and utilization of the university's resources in an effort to address those educational needs unique to each of the two aforementioned school systems.

The multidisciplinary nature of the LCEI is evident by virtue of its organizational position relative to the university structure and the two participating school systems. This organizational position is best described in terms of lines of authority and cooperation. (See Figure 1.) A line of authority connects Loyola's Academic Vice President and the Director of the LCEI. Lines of cooperation link the LCEI with the following: the Superintendent of the NOPSS, the Superintendent of the NOADSS, Loyola's academic

departments/colleges, Loyola's academic support offices/units, and various civic-based organizations. A line of cooperation also links Loyola's Academic Vice President with the Superintendents of the NOPSS and the NOADSS.

As of the spring of 1980, those academic departments/colleges at Loyola which provide resource personnel to the LCEI include the following: education, psychology, mathematics, English, biology (city college), history, foreign languages, physics, and music. Those academic support offices/units whose resources are being coordinated by the Center in its work with the two local school systems are as follows: counseling and career development center, tutorial assistance, office of research, office of institutional development, main library, financial aid office, admissions office, and public relations office. The two principal civic-based organizations with which the LCEI cooperates are the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce and the NOPSS's School-Business Partnership Program. Efforts are continually being made to involve an even broader representation of academic expertise and civic concerns in the LCEI's activities.

Due to the multidimensional nature of the problems confronting elementary and secondary education today, it is believed that a multidisciplinary approach is essential to the quest for viable solutions. The organizational position of the LCEI encourages such an approach in that it subsumes numerous academic units within the university and, hence, the diversity of expertise contained therein.

Functions of the LCEI

Both the public education component and the parochial education component of the LCEI involve three major functions: (a) school/teacher improvement, (b) research and evaluation, and (c) communication via a liaison role.

The school/teacher improvement function encompasses faculty development workshops in the areas of curriculum, instruction, administration, and guidance as well as lectures/demonstrations/field trips conducted by Loyola personnel to augment the educational programs in the schools thus served.

The research and evaluation function provides the needs assessment, grantsmanship, basic and applied research, and program evaluation activities necessary for the support and advancement of the improvement programs. Particularly worthy of note here is the potential for financial support from local, state, regional, federal, and foundational sources through the grantsmanship mechanism.

Finally, the communication function via the Center serving in a liaison role is crucial to ensuring the necessary articulation among Loyola University, the two local school systems, and the appropriate civic-based organizations. It is believed that through this liaison role Loyola's involvement in a community-wide exchange of ideas greatly enhances the identification and discussion of needs, priorities, resources, and proposals for action regarding elementary and secondary education in the New Orleans area.

Objectives and Activities of the LCEI

The objectives of the LCEI can be couched in general and specific terms. The general objective of the Center is as follows: to analyze, coordinate, and utilize the resources of Loyola University in an effort to improve the quality of elementary and secondary education in both the NOPSS and the NOADSS. The specific objectives of the LCEI, and their corresponding activities, include the following:

1. To improve the quality of education at a targeted inner-city school in the public sector--Fortier High School--by addressing the assessed needs in its curricular, instructional, administrative, and guidance programs. This objective is met by the establishment and implementation of:
   a. Faculty development workshops in the areas of curriculum, instruction, administration, and guidance.
   b. Linkages between the following academic areas at Loyola and their Fortier counterparts: education, psychology, mathematics, English, biology (city college), history, foreign languages, physics, music, counseling and career development, research, institutional development, main library, financial aid, admissions, and public relations. Each linkage involves at least one member of the academic area represented being available to conduct, usually on a monthly basis, a lecture/demonstration/field trip to augment the educational programs in the school.

c. Tutorial programs in mathematics and language arts conducted for students at Fortier by Loyola faculty and students.

2. To assist, upon request, other interested elementary and secondary schools in the NOPSS via faculty development workshops addressing the curricular, instructional, administrative, and/or guidance programs.

3. To provide a program of faculty development for elementary and secondary schools in the NOADSS as a follow-up to individual school self-study and evaluation committee reports. This objective is accomplished by:

   a. Apprising NOADSS administrators of the availability of LCEI-sponsored faculty development workshops via presentations made at the annual Catholic Schools Administrators' Conference held each fall.

   b. Conducting, upon request from any school in the NOADSS, faculty development workshops in the areas of curriculum, instruction, administration, guidance, and service-oriented programs.

4. To provide a 12-semester hour block of professional education courses which comprises a program for teacher development tailored to non-public school personnel. This program is offered specifically for those teachers in the NOADSS who already possess a baccalaureate degree in an academic discipline but are lacking the needed background in education. The courses offered in this program include the following: foundations of education, educational psychology, developmental psychology, and instructional design.

5. To engage in research and evaluation activities impacting primarily three secondary school in the NOPSS--Fortier High School, Kennedy High School, and Phillips Junior High School--and other schools upon request, with an emphasis on needs assessment, grantsmanship, basic and applied research, and program evaluation. This objective is accomplished by the:
   a. Establishment of an LCEI-based Instructional Psychology Clearinghouse which procures, catalogs, and houses conceptual and research literature documents pertaining to diverse topics in the field of instructional psychology.
   b. Design and implementation of research and evaluation studies in the areas of mastery learning and instructional design.
   c. Authoring and dissemination of LCEI-based technical reports of the research and evaluation studies conducted in the areas of mastery learning and instructional design.
   d. Preparation of grant applications for submission to governmental agencies and foundational sources in quest of external funds for the support of LCEI-based activities.
6. To engage in research and evaluation activities impacting the NOADSS with an emphasis on needs assessment, grantsmanship, basic and applied research, and program evaluation. This objective is accomplished by the LCEI being available to assist the NOADSS's Office of Research and Planning in any of the aforementioned areas of emphasis.

7. To facilitate communication among Loyola University, the NOPSS, the NOADSS, and various civic-based organizations by serving in a liaison role. This objective is met by:
   a. Apprising on a monthly basis Loyola's Office of Public Relations, the NOPSS's Department of Informational and Community Services, and the NOADSS's Office of the Superintendent of all LCEI-based activities.
   b. Promulgating to the Loyola community all LCEI-based activities via Campus News, Loyola of the South, and the establishment of an LCEI documents file (including, for example, technical reports, interim reports, final reports, etc.) among the reserve shelf holdings in the Main Library.
   c. Authoring and disseminating an LCEI interim report (at the conclusion of each fall semester) and a final report (at the conclusion of each academic year) to Loyola's Office of the President, Office of the Academic Vice President, and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.
   d. Being available, through the Loyola Speakers' Bureau, to address various civic-based organizations regarding LCEI activities.

LCEI Personnel

The LCEI is administered by a director who also serves on the faculty in Loyola's Department of Education. By virtue of (a) its multidisciplinary nature and (b) its charge to analyze, coordinate, and utilize Loyola's resources in an effort to improve elementary

and secondary education in the New Orleans area, the Center has involved over the last one and one-half years since its inception approximately 35 faculty, administrative, and academic-support personnel spanning 17 different academic areas. An obvious long-range goal of the LCEI is to have each and every academic area within the university structure represented in the Center's efforts at school/teacher improvement, research and evaluation, and communication.

Significance

A broad-based model for facilitating LEA/university cooperative efforts is represented by the design and operation of the LCEI. Of particular note in this model is the multidisciplinary nature of the Center as a basis for attempting to solve the multidimensional problems currently confronting school systems. Also wortny of attention are the three functions of the LCEI: school/teacher improvement, research and evaluation, and communication--functions which most institutions of higher learning are obviously equipped to address. Although the account and illustrations presented in this paper are specific to a certain university and its surrounding school systems, the nature, organization, and functions of such a multidisciplinary academic unit are indeed generalizable to other settings.

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FIGURE 1
ORGANIZATIONAL POSITION OF THE LCEI